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## **Attorney General Steve Carter outlines vision for the long-term financial stability of Conner Prairie**

Indianapolis – Attorney General Steve Carter believes establishing a new entity to serve as Trustee of the public charitable trust for the benefit of Conner Prairie is the best long-term solution to resolve recurring conflicts of financial management involving Earlham College and the living history museum.

“Reaching a common ground on the proper method of distribution of Eli Lilly funds is an issue that has plagued both Earlham and Conner Prairie for many years,” Carter added. “Resolution of this conflict can begin by establishing a new Trustee independent of the College. This step will eliminate any possible conflict that may arise from the public charitable trust’s Trustee also being a beneficiary of that same trust.

“Some will say the conflicts that I am trying to resolve were desired by Mr. Lilly. It is also reasonable to believe, though, that if the conflicts ever became an impediment to the thriving entity known as Conner Prairie, Lilly would have wanted well-intentioned Hoosiers to find a creative solution. I think that time has arrived.”

On Friday, the Attorney General’s Office filed a petition in Hamilton Superior Court III seeking a written statement of accounts from Earlham College regarding Eli Lilly gifts made for the benefit of Conner Prairie. Public charitable trusts with assets over \$500,000 are required by law to file a notice of the availability of an accounting with the Attorney General’s Office.

“Although Earlham officials have submitted records and documents, this petition provides a formal means to achieve a complete and accurate accounting for the Eli Lilly gifts,” Attorney General Steve Carter stated.

Carter’s vision for the management of the museum’s financial future includes the creation of a new entity that would be the Trustee of the Trust. This entity would own property, manage funds, and operate the Museum. A board of directors would be approved by the court.

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Carter points out the reasons to create a new entity with the sole responsibility to manage and operate the Museum:

1. Eliminates conflict of interest issues created when a trust beneficiary is also the trustee.
2. Provides financial stability for Earlham College and the Conner Prairie Museum through absolute separation of the financial gifts.
3. Establishes an entity with the sole focus on the Museum's mission and activities.
4. Resolves concerns over the local community's level of involvement in Museum activities.
5. Removes concerns that Museum operations might be curtailed or significantly reduced.
6. Enhances fundraising activities opportunities specifically for the Museum

"There is a need to keep Conner Prairie moving in the right direction," Carter explained. "Conner Prairie is a unique and important part of Indiana's history and I am sure that all of the parties involved want to insure that it stays that way into our future."

Carter stressed that the release of his vision and the filing for accounting information is not an indication of inappropriate behavior, but is part of an overall plan toward achieving a final resolution. Carter is inviting College officials to meet with him to move toward this goal.

A listing of public charitable trusts that have filed 2003 notice of accountings with the Attorney General's Office is posted on the Internet at [www.in.gov/attorneygeneral](http://www.in.gov/attorneygeneral). The list can be found under the Consumer Services link on the left hand side of the homepage.